

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 3
Columbia River Compact
February 27, 2012

<i>Fisheries under Consideration:</i>	Non-Indian Mainstem Commercial Salmon Treaty Commercial Sturgeon Treaty Commercial Salmon Sales
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Stock status and management guidelines for 2012 Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #1 (January 26, 2012).

- No adult Chinook have been observed at Bonneville Dam since January 25 when one fish was counted. Passage at Bonneville is usually less than 1% complete by the first of April. Chinook passage at Bonneville has been late-timed for six of the last ten years (2002-2011) with the 50% passage date ranging from April 24 to May 12 and averaging May 6.
- River flows this winter/spring have been about average to date. Visibility at Bonneville Dam is normal but remains reduced in the lower river due to tributary influences. River temperatures in January were also normal but the February average is tracking at 38.7 F, compared to the 10-year average of 40.0 F.

Non-Indian Mainstem Commercial Fishery

- The number of upriver spring Chinook (kept plus release mortalities) available to the mainstem commercial fishery prior to a run size update is 5,914 fish. An additional 9,600 Willamette spring Chinook are available to commercial fisheries for the 2012 spring season. Upriver catch limitations generally restrict access to the commercial Willamette allocation.
- As outlined in Winter Factsheet #1, some commercial fishers have requested fishing opportunity early in the season when proportions of the Willamette origin Chinook in the catch and ex-vessel prices are the highest. However, opinions regarding early fishing opportunity remain mixed within the commercial industry. Pre-season modeling indicates a net gain in commercial ex-vessel value can be realized if a portion of the commercial catch occurs in February.
- However, steelhead abundance generally requires the use of large mesh nets which accrues spring Chinook impacts at a faster rate due to the assigned 40% release mortality rate. Therefore, the catch of spring Chinook with large mesh gear should be limited to avoid reducing the number of fish available for harvest later in the pre-update timeframe using tangle net gear.
- A target cap of 650 upriver spring Chinook (kept + release mortalities) for early large-mesh fisheries should yield a kept catch of at least 800 fish, resulting in an ex-vessel value for the pre-update commercial catch 11% greater than if all of the commercial pre-update allowable catch were harvested entirely with tangle net gear in late March.
- Use of large mesh gear during February would reduce impacts available for fishing in the post-update time frame (May) if the run size allows for additional fishing opportunity.

However, the season total ex-vessel value would still exceed a March tangle net/May large mesh approach.

- Test fishing occurred February 26 to index Chinook and steelhead abundance and Chinook stock ratios. Test fishing was conducted with both tangle net and large mesh gear, and occurred in Zones 2-3. A total of 16 drifts (both gear types) resulted in the handle of 5 Chinook and 11 steelhead.
- Of those 16 drifts, 12 were conducted with 8-inch mesh. Salmonid handle with this large mesh gear was 4 Chinook and 2 steelhead. The remaining 4 drifts were conducted with small mesh, or tangle net gear, and salmonid handle was 1 Chinook and 9 steelhead.

2012 Spring Chinook Observation Summary. All data preliminary															
					Chinook Adult Data										
					Lower R.		UpRiver		Ttl					Steelhead	
Fishery	Mon.	Date	Mesh	# of Drifts	Ad-Clip	No-Clip	Ad-Clip	No-Clip	Ttl Chin	Chin MR	Chin/Drift	Chin/Sthd	Sthd/Drift	Total Sthd	Mark Rate
Test	Feb	14-15	4.25	11					0					15	0.33
Test	Feb	14-15	8	5					0					2	0.00
Test	Feb	21	4.25	4					0					2	0.50
Test	Feb	21	8	12	1				1	100%	0.1		0.0	0	
Test	Feb	26	4.25	4			1		1	100%	0.3	0.1	2.3	9	0.33
Test	Feb	26	8	12	2		2		4	100%	0.3	2.0	0.2	2	0.00

- Based on the pre-season commercial fishing plan and test fishery results, staff is making the following recommendation for a non-Indian commercial salmon fishery:

Joint Staff Recommendation- Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Fishery	
Season:	10:00 AM to 10:00 PM Tuesday February 28, 2012 (12 hours)
Area:	Zones 1-4, upstream to Kelley Point.
Sanctuaries:	Grays River, Elochoman-B, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-B, Lewis-B
Allowable Sales:	Adipose fin-clipped Chinook salmon, shad and white sturgeon (43-54 inch fork length). A maximum of 6 white sturgeon may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel during each calendar week (Sunday through Saturday) that the fishery is open.
Gear:	<p>Drift nets only. 8" minimum mesh size restriction. Net length not to exceed 150 fathoms.</p> <p>Nets not specifically authorized for use in this fishery may be onboard the vessel if properly stored. A properly stored net is defined as a net on a drum that is fully covered by a tarp (canvas or plastic) and bound with a minimum of ten revolutions of rope with a diameter of 3/8 (0.375) inches or greater</p> <p>Standard regulations typically in place for spring Chinook commercial fisheries are in effect, including but not limited to: net length, use of recovery boxes, limited soak times, red corks, lighted buoys, tangle-net certification, etc.</p> <p>Soak times, defined as the time elapsed from when the first of the gill net web is deployed into the water until the gill net web is fully retrieved from the water, must not exceed 45 minutes.</p>

Red corks are required at 25 fathom intervals, and red corks must be in contrast to the corks used in the remainder of the net.

Lighted Buoys: Nets that are fished at any time between official sunset and official sunrise must have lighted buoys on both ends of the net unless the net is attached to the boat. If the net is attached to the boat, then one lighted buoy on the opposite end of the net from the boat is required

Recovery Box: Each boat will be required to have on board two operable recovery boxes or one box with two chambers that meet the flow and size requirements standard for the winter/spring season. Each box and chamber and associated pump shall be operating during any time that the net is being retrieved or picked. The fisher must demonstrate to WDFW and ODFW employees, fish and wildlife enforcement officers, or other peace officers, upon request, that the pumping system is delivering the proper volume of fresh river water into each chamber. All non-legal sturgeon, non-adipose fin-clipped salmon, and steelhead must be released immediately to the river with care and with the least possible injury to the fish, or placed into an operating recovery box. Any fish that is bleeding or lethargic must be placed in the recovery box prior to being released. All fish placed in recovery boxes must be released to the river prior to landing or docking.

Additional Rules: **Observer program:** As a condition of fishing, owners or operators of commercial fishing vessels must cooperate with department observers or observers collecting data for the department, when notified by the observer of his or her intent to board the commercial vessel for observation and sampling during an open fishery.

Live Capture workshop: Only licensed Columbia River commercial fishers that have completed the required state-sponsored workshop concerning live capture commercial fishing techniques may participate in this fishery. At least one fisher on each boat must have live capture certification.

24-hour **quick reporting** required for Washington wholesale dealers, per WAC 220-69-240.

- Based on the expected participation and the observed Chinook per drift and mark rate, the expected catch is 200 Chinook (100-300 range).
- High winds and generally poor weather conditions are forecasted for Tuesday, which may limit participation and reduce catch.
- Based on a kept catch of 200 fish, the upriver Chinook catch (kept plus release mortalities) is projected to be 165 fish, or 2.8% of the 5,914 fish available to the mainstem commercial fishery prior to a run update.
- The use of large mesh gear reduces steelhead handle. Wild winter steelhead release mortalities are expected to be less than 20 fish (0.13% impact).
- A balance of 438 fish, or 91% of the 480 white sturgeon allocated to winter/spring commercial fisheries remain available.
- As part of the 2012 Commercial Fishing Plan, two fishing periods may take place during any given week. This scenario would include a full fleet fishery on Tuesday, followed by a Compact on Wednesday to consider a fishing period on Thursday.
- If the proposed fishery is adopted, and the resulting catch is within expectations, staff may consider scheduling a hearing for Wednesday February 29 in order for the Compact to consider a similar fishing period on Thursday March 1.
- Test fishing is scheduled to occur again on Sunday March 4.

Treaty Indian Fisheries

- Under permanent regulations, a winter gillnet fishery is open in Zone 6 from noon February 1 to 6:00 p.m. March 21. Allowable sales include sturgeon, salmon, steelhead as well as miscellaneous non-native fish caught with gillnets and with platform/hook & line gear within the Zone 6 area as well as the area downstream of Bonneville Dam during times these fisheries are open under the terms of agreements with the states.
- The tribes are proposing to end the allowance of sale of Chinook in their mainstem fisheries after February 29.
- The tribes are also proposing to close the winter gillnet fishery in the John Day Pool on March 1. The platform and hook and line fishery in the John Day Pool would remain open for subsistence use under its normal rules. Sales of all fish caught in this area would be discontinued.
- Harvest in 2012 tribal winter season fisheries (preliminary through 2/26/12) totals 1,737 sturgeon, 2 Chinook, 6 steelhead and 4 walleye. Sturgeon harvest by pool and fishery is listed below.

2012 Treaty-Indian Sturgeon Harvest through February 26 (all data preliminary)					
Pool	Commercial Guideline	January Setline	Winter Gillnet	Harvest Total	Sturgeon remaining
Bonneville	2,000	122	809	931	1,069
The Dalles	1,000	3	9	12	988
John Day	1,000	111	683	794	206
Total	4,000	236	1,501	1,737	2,263

Recommendation: Winter Commercial Fishery in the John Day Pool

- Effective 6:00 PM Thursday March 1: The commercial winter gillnet fishery in the John Day Pool will close. The platform and hook and line fishery will remain open for subsistence use.

Recommendation: Commercial Sales of Chinook

- Chinook salmon harvested in tribal mainstem fisheries above and below Bonneville Dam after 6:00 PM on Wednesday February 29 may not be sold, but may be retained for subsistence purposes.

Future Meetings

- Staff is not recommending a hearing at this time, however staff may announce a hearing for Wednesday February 29 if the proposed fishery is adopted and catch is within expectations.